



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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ROBERT W. GOLLEDGE, Jr.
Commissioner

URGENT NOTICE
Lead in School Drinking Water

March 30, 2004

Dear Superintendents of Public Schools, Private and Parochial School Principals, and Collaborative Directors:

Does the drinking water at your school have elevated lead levels? Why should this be of concern?

The internal plumbing of many schools can cause elevated lead levels in drinking water. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern for all individuals, particularly young children, infants and pregnant women. It is important that you evaluate each school's water outlets (taps and fountains) to determine if elevated lead levels exist. If elevated lead levels exist, immediate action should be taken.

What action needs to be taken?

Forward this letter to each of the school principals under your supervision and request that they take the following actions:

1. Contact your local public water supplier
(<http://mass.gov/dep/brp/dws/contdwp.htm#related>) to determine if your schools have already been evaluated for lead in drinking water.
 - a. If each school has been evaluated and a correction action plan developed, the school must continue to follow the corrective action plan and complete the DEP Drinking Water Maintenance Checklist and return it to the address on the form. An electronic copy is available at <http://mass.gov/dep/brp/dws/lead.htm>.
 - b. If each school has not been evaluated, work with the local public water supplier to determine whether or not you should evaluate the school's water outlets (taps and fountains) to determine if any of the sites need water testing, a plumbing evaluation, and/or a corrective action plan. Complete and return the DEP Drinking Water Maintenance Checklist noted above.
2. If the water has elevated lead levels, contact DEP and your local Board of Health immediately. (see web site above).

This information is available in alternate format. Call Debra Doherty, ADA Coordinator at 617-292-5565. TDD Service - 1-800-298-2207.

DEP on the World Wide Web: <http://www.mass.gov/dep>



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Training Opportunities and Technical Assistance Materials

DEP will be sponsoring four training classes entitled "Lead in Drinking Water". For a description of the classes and a listing of documents to assist schools in identifying and minimizing lead in schools visit our web site at <http://mass.gov/dep/brp/dws/dwshome.htm>. You may also contact your local Board of Health, Plumbing Inspector or local water department if you need assistance.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact Frank R. Niles of the DEP, Drinking Water Program at (617) 574-6871 or the Drinking Water Program at Program.Director-DWP@state.ma.us

Sincerely,

Robert W. Golledge, Jr.
Commissioner

Attachments

cc: David P. Driscoll Commissioner Department of Education;
Christine C. Ferguson, Commissioner Department of Public Health;
United States Environmental Protection Agency;
Boards of Health;
Public Water Suppliers;
Plumbing Inspectors